

## Somerset County

Created on April 17, 1795, from part of Bedford County and named for Somersetshire, England. Somerset, the county seat was laid out in 1795 and incorporated as a borough on March 5, 1804.

Traversed by the Forbes Road in 1758, it became legal to settle the Somerset area after the “New Purchase” of 1768. German Brethren groups from New Jersey settled Brothers Valley, and the radical preacher Harmon Husband joined them in 1771. A rye and whiskey economy involved the area in the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794 against the federal government’s tax on distilleries. Although punished, Husband, who died June 1795, saw the county created that April. Robert Philson, also a Whiskey leader, lived on as Somerset’s political leader. More land was added in 1800, but some was yielded to create Cambria County in 1804. An Agricultural Society was formed in 1828 to pursue intelligent farm methods. Cattle and sheep were very productive, and the cloth called linsey-woolsey was manufactured. Maple sugar was important. There was a severe frost in 1859, when only the buckwheat crop prevented starvation. Although coal had been mined and timber cut since 1770s, only when the Somerset and Cumberland Railroad opened in 1871 were big lumber and coal industries developed. Large mines began in 1872, and later a branch of the B. & O. Railroad opened the northern coal section. Babcock Lumber Company flourished until the lumber was gone in 1912. The population had mushroomed. Peak coal production occurred in 1920—10.5 million tons! There were violent coal strikes in 1903, 1906, and 1922. Coal production fell off sharply, but dairying and potato production increased in the 1920s. The 1936 flood eliminated the old wooden miners’ houses. The peak population occurred in 1940 (84,957), the same year the Pennsylvania Turnpike appeared and saved the county’s economy. Today there is heavy production of hay, oats, milk, potatoes, and alfalfa; one third of the county is farmland. Potato chips are produced, and tourism, especially skiing, is important. When U.S. 219 opened from Ebensburg to Somerset in 1969, it augmented the Turnpike by providing a north-south artery. Somerset is now the second highest bituminous producing county.

SOMERSET COUNTY - 6th Class

Formed on April 17, 1795 from part of Bedford County

Boroughs

<u>Name of Borough</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Town Laid Out or Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Addison	Feb. 28, 1912	1798	Addison Township
Benson	Nov. 15, 1892	1880	Paint Township
Berlin	Feb. 7, 1833 <sup>1</sup> 1836 <sup>2</sup>	1784	Brothers Valley Township
Boswell	1904	1901	Jenner Township
Casselman	1891	1869	Upper Turkeyfoot Township
Central City	May 6, 1918	1848	Shade Township
Confluence	1873	1870	Lower Turkeyfoot Township
Garrett	1900	1869	Summit Township
Hooversville	1896	1836	Quemahoning Township
Jennerstown	1874	1822	Jenner Township
Meyersdale	1871	1844	Summit Township
New Baltimore	1874	1829	Allegheny Township
New Centerville	Mar. 6, 1854	1834	Milford Township
Paint	1900		Paint Township
Rockwood	1885	1857	Milford Township
Salisbury	1862	1796	Elk Lick Township
Shanksville	Jan. 25, 1913	1829	Stonycreek Township
Somerset	Mar. 5, 1804	1795	Somerset Township
Stoystown	Mar. 29, 1819	1774	Quemahoning Twp. Reincorporated in 1838
Ursina	1872	1868	Lower Turkeyfoot Township
Wellersburg	1857 <sup>1</sup> Aug. 28, 1856 <sup>2</sup>	1830	Southampton Township
Windber	July 3, 1900	1897	Paint Township

Second Class Townships

<u>Name of Township</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Addison	1800	1764	Turkeyfoot Township
Allegheny	1805	1790	Southampton Township
Black	1886	1774	Milford Township
Brothersvalley	1771	1769	Incorporated while part of Bedford County
Conemaugh	1801	1762	Quemahoning Township

SOMERSET COUNTY - 6th Class (cont'd)

Second Class Townships (cont'd)

<u>Name of Township</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Elk Lick	1785		Brothersvalley Township
Fairhope	1891		Allegheny, Northampton and Southampton Townships
Greenville	1812	1785	Elk Lick and Southampton Townships
Jefferson	1847	1784	Somerset and Milford Twps.
Jenner	1811	1776	Quemahoning and Conemaugh Townships
Larimer	1854		Greenville and Northampton Townships
Lincoln	1890	1793	Somerset Township
Lower Turkeyfoot	1848	1765	Turkeyfoot Township
Middlecreek	1853	1790	Milford Township
Milford	1780	1772	Turkeyfoot Township
Northampton	1851	1775	Southampton Township
Ogle	1886		Paint Township
Paint	1836	1795	Shade Township
Quemahoning	1775	1774	Turkeyfoot and Brothersvalley Townships
Shade	1816	1762	Stonycreek Township
Somerset	1796	1771	Quemahoning and Milford Townships
Southampton	1801	1780	Londonderry Township
Stonycreek	1792	1762	Quemahoning Township
Summit	1843	1779	Elk Lick and Brothersvalley Townships
Upper Turkeyfoot	1848	1765	Turkeyfoot Township

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1 Godcharles

2 John C. Cassady, The Somerset County Outline (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1932).

3 William H. Koontz, (ed.), History of Bedford and Somerset Counties, Pennsylvania, Vol. II (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1906).